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Peacebuilding Commission
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Summary record of the 6th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 4 September 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Muñoz ..... (Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/3/OC/21)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Adoption of the draft report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its third session (PBC/3/OC/L.1)

2. **The Chairperson** recalled that the text of the draft report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its third session (PBC/3/OC/L.1) had already been provisionally approved by the Organizational Committee, pending its translation into all United Nations official languages.

3. *The report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its third session was adopted.*

4. **Mr. Ney** (Germany) said that the draft report provided a clear picture of where the Peacebuilding Commission stood three years after its establishment. The fact that 30 per cent of countries relapsed into conflict within five years of a peace agreement demonstrated the tremendous challenges that remained for peacebuilding. He shared the assessment of the second annual informal retreat, held in February 2009, that encouraging results had been achieved, particularly in Sierra Leone and Burundi, and that integrated peacebuilding strategies were the right approach. Full and consistent implementation of those strategies was essential to the success — measured in terms of tangible results achieved for people on the ground — and credibility of the Peacebuilding Commission.

5. It was essential to have continued support from traditional donors and to rally support for the common strategy and integrated framework for peacebuilding. To ensure adequate and sustained funding, efforts to engage new donors, particularly international financial bodies such as the World Bank, were welcome. In that context, the amendments to the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund would increase its flexibility, operational speed and effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

6. On the ground, the coordinating role of the Peacebuilding Commission should be strengthened to ensure the coherent coordination of measures and donor contributions so that resources and capacities could be channelled to peacebuilding priorities. Capacity-building should be a central element of all peacebuilding activities, since the ability of partners to deal with challenges on their own would be a vital prerequisite for successfully ending the Commission's involvement. In New York, enhanced cooperation with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council would strengthen the Commission's role within the United Nations system. While greater public awareness of the Commission's work would undoubtedly lead to increased support, the best publicity would be results achieved on the ground, which must therefore be the Commission's main focus. Germany stood ready to support the agenda set out by the Secretary-General in his report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881).

7. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the Commission had achieved significant success in the effort to consolidate post-conflict recovery and strengthen the foundation for socio-economic development in Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two countries on its agenda.

8. The Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission must play a central role in steering the Commission's overall work, including the programme of work. The informal retreat had proven extremely productive, even fostering and strengthening partnerships, and should become an annual event. He welcomed the increased interaction and collaboration between the Chairperson of the Commission and the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and endorsed all other activities undertaken by the Chairperson to improve the coordination of all relevant actors involved in peacebuilding. The amendment of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund had been a highlight of the period under review. He hoped that their implementation would help achieve the Fund's purpose as a flexible and focused resource for peacebuilding support. The quarterly briefings provided by the Peacebuilding Support Office on the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund had been useful.

9. Some remaining shortcomings should be addressed during the Commission's next session. Every effort should be made to develop rules of procedure and working methods for the Commission. The Chairperson should occasionally include the Commission's wider membership in interactions with the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The highly valuable findings of the Working Group on

Lessons Learned must be incorporated into the overall strategy and policy of the Commission.

10. Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement continued to lament the lack of focus on the development dimension of peacebuilding. Greater emphasis must be placed on education and training, agricultural and infrastructure development, and private sector reform and development with an emphasis on job creation.

Remarks by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support

11. **Ms. Cheng-Hopkins** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said she was aware that her appointment had come at a very important juncture for the new peacebuilding architecture. Peace was the ultimate public good, and while peacebuilding was one of the key areas for the future relevance of the United Nations, it had not yet been dealt with as comprehensively as could be the case. However, given the establishment of the new architecture, and the Commission's commitment and enthusiasm, the outlook for effective peacebuilding in future was very positive. The experience that she had gained with the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would be very valuable in her current role, since peacebuilding incorporated elements of development, relief and human rights-related work.

12. Peacebuilding consisted of three building blocks, held together by the cement of national ownership: firstly, the essential role of government, in such areas as security, political reconciliation, the rule of law and justice; secondly, the provision of basic services, including health care, education and basic infrastructure, to restore a sense of normality to the population following the end of conflict; and, thirdly, the creation of livelihoods, both to give hope to ordinary people — the "peace dividend" — and to enable the demobilization of soldiers, which was an essential but very challenging aspect of peacebuilding.

13. Project implementation in very difficult circumstances posed the biggest challenge to successful peacebuilding, and in that connection, the ability to fully engage operational agencies was key. As emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General (PBC/3/OC/L.1), it was also vital to ensure the coherence of peacebuilding efforts, which was therefore another major task of the Peacebuilding Support Office with other stakeholders.

14. The most important component of the new peacebuilding architecture was the Commission. The fact that it was directly involved in delivering its mandate permitted government-to-government engagement, which sometimes yielded results that could not be achieved by international civil servants. Members of the Commission were also able to maintain a long-term, stable commitment to countries emerging from conflict. The functioning of the second component of the new architecture — the Peacebuilding Fund — had been revised in response to criticisms that it was not flexible enough; instead of three funding windows it now had two, consisting of an immediate response facility to prevent flare-ups of conflict and a peacebuilding and recovery facility, which depended on an integrated-plan approach. Lastly, the Peacebuilding Support Office, which was the third component of the new architecture, would strive to perform an even better support and facilitation role in the future.

15. **The Chairperson** welcomed the newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support. Recalling that post-conflict peacebuilding was increasingly recognized as one of the most critical challenges facing the United Nations and the international community, he expressed confidence that her extensive experience in the United Nations system and in the field would greatly contribute to collective endeavours to meet those challenges.

16. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin) said that the Commission should continue to play a catalytic role and serve as a framework for harmonizing strategies for intervention in the countries on its agenda. He welcomed the comments of the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support regarding the building blocks of peacebuilding and hoped that the Commission would continue to move in that direction. The participation of national actors was particularly important, as was the role of the Peacebuilding Fund. Speedy disbursement of funds was critical to the implementation of the most crucial measures in peacebuilding and to preventing the resumption of conflict. The important role of the Working Group on Lessons Learned should also be emphasized.

Closure of the third session of the Peacebuilding Commission

17. **The Chairperson** declared the third session of the Peacebuilding Commission closed.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.